



Studio 27

Visiting Artist

Brigitte Poulin, piano

Thursday, January 30, 2003 at 8:00 pm

Program



Program

Sonatas and Interludes (1946-48)

John Cage
(1912-1992)

Sonatas No. 1, 2, 3, 4

First Interlude

Sonatas No. 5, 6, 7, 8

Second Interlude

Third Interlude

Sonatas No. 9, 10, 11, 12

Fourth Interlude

Sonata No. 13

Sonatas No. 14 and 15 (Gemini after the work by Richard Lippold)

Sonata No. 16

Program Notes

John Cage and the history of the prepared piano

John Cage (1912-1992) began his career on the West Coast in the Thirties as an organizer of and composer for percussion ensemble - still a new and radical idea in Western music. His interest in Eastern art and philosophy as well as his long and fruitful collaboration with the dancer-choreographer, Merce Cunningham, also date from this period.

The prepared piano, a history: The "prepared" piano started out of necessity: in 1938, John Cage was working as a pianist / accompanist at the Cornish School of Dance in Seattle. A black dancer / choreographer, Syvilla Fort, asked him to compose some music for one of her pieces which was going to be performed in a few days. Cage, who up to that point had principally been writing for percussion ensemble, had to deal with a stage that could only allow for a dancer and a grand piano. He therefore attempted to transform the piano into a percussion instrument. He first tried placing several ordinary household objects on the strings: a fork, a plate, a nail, which gave interesting but unstable results (since these objects tended to move along the vibrating strings). Cage then thought of using screws (which could be fixed in place). From that point on, things got rolling. This first experiment with piano preparation led to the composition of *Bacchanale* and started a ten-year period of experimentation with piano preparation. *Sonatas and Interludes* concludes this ten-year period. This "big piece with a quiet voice" (written between 1946 and 1948) calls for the preparation of 46 notes with several types of screws, nuts, bolts, pieces of rubber and plastic.

Cage believed that his music needed to "communicate" hence Sonatas and Interludes attempted to express ideas derived from Sri Ramakrishna, among which the most fundamental was that the goal of art is to quieten the mind. It is through the long and patient composition process of Sonatas and Interludes that Cage became fascinated with the dramatic power of silence. At the end of the process Cage's tendency towards quietness, silence and simplicity were permanently altered.

The whole of Sonatas and Interludes was first performed in 1948 in Carnegie Hall by Maro Ajemian. It is also in 1948 that Cage received his first important grants "for having pushed the foundations of musical art through the invention of the prepared piano." Cage wrote about Sonatas and Interludes: "They have been written in my new apartment on the East River in lower Manhattan which turns its back to the city and looks to the water and the sky."

Brigitte Poulin

Brigitte is an active and accomplished soloist, chamber musician and vocal accompanist. Her list of repertoire is extensive and covers all periods, from the invention to the deconstruction of the piano. She studied at the Vienna Academy of Music, the Banff Centre for the Arts, the Montreal Music Conservatory, and obtained a doctorate specialized in the interpretation of contemporary piano literature from l'Universite de Montreal. A proponent of 20th and 21st century music, Brigitte founded, with Belgian flautist Lieve Schuermans and English cellist Simon Turner, the Trio Phoenix, an ensemble essentially dedicated to the works of living composers.

Brigitte has performed for numerous Music Festivals in Europe, Canada and the USA (among others: June in Buffalo, Brussels Ars Musica, Edmonton's New Music Festival and the York Late Music Festival, Adur Arts Forum). She has also given piano master classes and chamber music workshops in Canadian Universities. Brigitte has recorded CDs (solo and chamber music) for Montreal companies SNE, Fonovox and Amberola. Her concerts and recitals have been broadcast by the CBC, the SRC, the BRT and the BBC.

Last season (2001-02), Brigitte premiered works by Serge Arcuri, Denys Bouliane, Sean Ferguson, Malcolm Goldstein, and Jean-Francois Laporte. She performed Tchaikovsky's first piano Concerto with L'Orchestre symphonique de la Montregie under the Direction of Marc David and was guest artist at McGill University's Contemporary Music Ensemble for the performance of Alban Berg's Chamber Concerto under the direction of Denys Bouliane.

In 2002-2003, Brigitte will premier a solo work by Justin Mariner, will perform Morton Feldman's masterpiece for Bunita Marcus, and Steve Reich's Six Pianos (with L'Ensemble contemporain de Montreal). Brigitte will take John Cage's Sonatas and Interludes and her program of new works by Montreal composers on a six city tour of Canada and the U.S. As a member of Trio Phoenix, Brigitte will also perform concerts in England, Belgium and Canada introducing new works by Belgian composer Jeroen D'Hoe and English composers Michael Finnissy and Chris Gander.

Upcoming Events:

February

1 Saturday, 6:00 pm

MSA Formal. For ticket and event information, please contact the MSA Executive by e-mail: th@ualberta.ca

3 Monday, 12:10 pm

Music at Noon, Convocation Hall
Student Recital Series featuring students from the Department of Music.
Free admission

5, 6, 7, 8 Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat, 8:00 pm

The University of Alberta *Opera*
Full Opera Performance of **The Magic Flute** by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Alan Ord, Artistic Director
Sylvia Shadick-Taylor, Repetiteur
Tanya Prochazka, Music Director and Conductor
with **The Edmonton Swiss Men's Choir**
The University Symphony Orchestra

9 Sunday, 4:00 pm

Saxophone Masterclass
with Visiting Artist **Jean-Marie Londeix**
Studio 27, Fine Arts Building 2-7
Free admission

10 Monday, 8:00 pm

Music at Convocation Hall
William H Street, saxophone
Roger Admiral, piano
Works by Denisov, Fisher,
Bashaw, Lauba, Bauzin,
Gallois-Montbrun and Heider
Admission: \$12/adult, \$7/student/senior

14 Friday, 6:00 pm

The University of Alberta
Academy Strings Valentine's Ball
Tanya Prochazka, Conductor
University of Alberta Faculty Club
For tickets and event information, please call 492-9410

23 Sunday, 9:30 am

Piano Masterclass
with Visiting Artist **Angela Cheng**
Free admission

24 Monday, 12:00 pm

Noon-Hour Organ Recital
The recital presents a variety of organ repertoire played by students, faculty and guests of the University of Alberta.
Free admission

28 Friday, 8:00 pm

Faculty & Friends
Marnie Giesbrecht, organ
An evening of French and German Nineteenth-Century Organ Music
Works by Schumann, Liszt, Reger, Franck, Widor and others
Admission: \$12/adult, \$7/student/senior



Please donate to Campus Food Bank

Unless otherwise indicated

Admission: \$5/student/senior, \$10/adult
Convocation Hall, Arts Building, University of Alberta

Please note: All concerts and events are subject to change without notice. Please call 492-0601 to confirm concerts (after office hours a recorded message will inform you of any changes to our schedule).